

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05 IGA-01 EB-07 IO-10

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 XMB-04 /066 W

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R 090445Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

UNCLAS KATHMANDU 0135

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, NP

SUBJ: POKHARA DAM COLLAPSES

1. ON JANUARY 2 SECTIONS OF PARTI DAM ON PHEWA LAKE IN POKHARA COLLAPSED DUE TO EROSION, CUTTING OFF SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY TO POKHARA VALLEY. GON TEAM COMPOSED OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICITY AND DEPARTMENT OF IRRIGATION OFFICIALS, ACCOMPANIED BY UNDP RESREP, IS PRESENTLY IN POKHARA CONDUCTING INVESTIGATION. SOME PRELIMINARY BUT UNOFFICIAL REPORTS INDICATE THAT DAM SITE MAY HAVE TO BE RELOCATED AND WNTIRELY REBUILT, OVER TWO TO THREE YEAR PERIOD. ELECTRICITY OFFICIALS ARE RUSHING TO PUT SMALL DIESEL PLANT OF 346 KW INTO OPERATION IN POKHARA HOPEFULLY WITHIN NEXT WEEK, WHICH COULD PROVIDE MARGINAL POWER SUPPLY.

2. PARTI DAM, WHICH WAS BUILT WITH INDIAN AID IN 1961 AT COST OF RUPEES 1.5 MILLION, HAD CAPACITY FOR GENERATING 1,000 KW OF ELECTRICITY AND IRRIGATING 320 HECTARES OF LAND. GOI'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAM ENDED IN 1964. OFFICIALS OF INDIAN EMBASSY AND INDIAN AID MISSION (ICM) REPORT THAT GON HAS NOT YET REQUESTED ANY INDIAN ASSISTANCE TO REPAIR DAM.

3. COMMENT: EXTENT OF ECONOMIC LOSS TO THE POKHARA REGION,
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WHICH WILL DEPEND ON LENGTH OF TIME NEEDED TO REPAIR, OR

REBUILD DAM, WILL NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL GON TEAM COMPLETES
INVESTIGATION LATER THIS WEEK. COLLAPSE
OF DAM COULD CUT INTO TOURIST TRAFFIC TO POKHARA, ONE OF NEPAL'S
MOST SCENIC AREAS. INDEED, ONE OF MAJOR HOTELS IN POKHARA,
FISHTAIL LODGE, IS LOCATED ON SHORE OF PHEWA LAKE, WHICH
IS NOW REDUCED IN SIZE AS A RESULT
OF DISASTER. QUANTON

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Disposition Event:
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